

A JOHNSONIAN NEWS LETTER

Vol. II, No. 3 Address communications to J. L. Clifford June, 1942
Lehigh University, Bethlehem, Penna.

It is good news that the English Institute plans to continue its meetings despite the war. And the dates now selected should suit almost anyone near enough to New York to attend -- three days from Saturday, Sept. 5, through Monday, Sept. 7.

A number of the sessions should appeal to 18th century scholars, notably the conferences on "Problems of Authenticity and Attribution," directed by R.C. Bald (Cornell), which include a discussion of "Problems in the Canon of Swift" led by Herbert J. Davis (Smith). The sessions on "Problems in Philosophical Criticism," led by T. M. Greene (Princeton) and Cleanth Brooks (L.S.U.), and those on "Interpretation in Biography," led by Donald A. Stauffer (Princeton) should also include much of interest to our members.

If you think you can find a way to get to New York on Labor Day week-end, and would like to spend a few days in friendly, intimate association with others of similar tastes, send in your name now to Rudolf Kirk at Rutgers Univ., New Brunswick, N. J.

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Congratulations are still in order to our new brother publication, The Seventeenth Century News Letter. The second issue, for May, is just as excellently set up and as full of interesting and valuable information as the first.

We like particularly the literary puzzle on page six, and wish that we might provide our readers with similar reproductions of mysterious manuscript annotations. Can anyone suggest a method of doing the same sort of thing though using simple mimeograph technique?

NEWS FROM ENGLAND

It is with great regret that our readers will learn of the resignation of R. W. Chapman as Secretary of the Delegates of the Oxford University Press. For 36 years he has been connected with the Press, and has held his present position since 1919. But because of ill health he has now been forced to give up active participation in the work of publishing. Kenneth Sisam now takes his place as Secretary.

Johnsonians may perhaps be pardoned for also finding cause for joy in this announcement, since it will mean an earlier publication date of the great edition of Johnson's letters, begun many years ago. In fact Chapman is now hard at work on the text and the introduction, and intends to get on with the work as speedily as possible.

It has been his goal to see as many of the original manuscripts of Johnson's letters as possible. Mrs. Piozzi, it will be remembered, was not a scrupulous editor, nor were others too accurate in reading his difficult hand. Thus, in order to produce a good text it is vitally necessary to compare all early printed versions with the originals. For years the editor has been patiently following the trail of dispersed letters, but still some elude him, particularly a few addressed to Mrs. Thrale which are known to have come to the U.S. in 1918. Will our readers be on the look-out for manuscript letters in private or public collections which have not yet been examined? A list of those already seen may be found in the R.E.S. for April, 1937, and Jan., 1940.

The recent death of George Gordon, President of Magdalen College, Ox-

ford, will be much lamented. His interest in the Johnson circle was well known.

E. de Selincourt writes to R. D. Havens (Johns Hopkins) that the war is now holding up publication of scholarly books. His own Wordsworthian volumes have been greatly delayed.

E. S. de Beer has recently been elected a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries.

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THRALIANA

Finally, after many long years of labor, Katharine Balderston's (Wellesley) edition of the Thraliana diary has been published by the Clarendon Press in Oxford. It appeared on April 9, and a few copies have arrived in this country. More will soon be available.

Until now, only about a fourteenth of this lengthy commonplace book and journal, which filled six large quarto volumes, has been printed. Hayward, Hughes, Lord Lansdowne, and Powell, to be sure, culled some of the most interesting and amusing Johnsonian passages, but vast quantities of other anecdotes and comments remained unknown. Scholars have had to wait 121 years after Mrs. Piozzi's death to examine all she set down for posterity.

Held closely in the Salusbury family until 1922, the journal then crossed the Atlantic to the Huntington Library in California, and it is due to the generosity of the trustees of the latter institution that the present volumes are now available.

Most readers, perhaps, have the mistaken idea that Thraliana is given over almost entirely to anecdotes about Dr. Johnson and to personal records of the Thrale family. A great deal more than that is included; in fact, almost every-

one interested in the 18th century will find in this journal something of importance to his own research. And with Katharine Balderston's excellent editing and superb index all this evidence is now easily available.

Thraliana is not like the diary of Fanny Burney, one to be read straight through for a connected narrative. It is merely a storehouse of miscellaneous information, some accurate and some doubtful, which should be sampled but not digested whole. How fortunate it is, then, that the editor was willing to devote long, tiresome hours in the arrangement of a complete and efficient index, modelled on the best index of our day, that of the Boswell Papers! Students for many years to come will be constantly in her debt when they consult this indispensable reference work.

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PERSONALS

Jim Osborn (Yale) has recently been appointed director of A.R.P. Training for the entire state of Connecticut.

Walter Graham (Ill.) is now one of the editors of The Journal of English and Germanic Philology. It is good to know that an 18th Century enthusiast is one of the triumvirate who edit this famous periodical.

Allen Hazen (Yale), Johnsonian bibliographer par excellence, has accepted a position in the English department of Hunter College for next year.

W.S. Lewis, the editor of Walpole's correspondence, is now in Washington in the office of the Coordinator of Information.